

Volume: II
Chapter: 615
Date: October 16, 2001

SUBJECT : Management and Use of Telecommunications Resources

TO : All Employees, USIBWC
Presidents, AFGE Locals 3060 & 3309

CONTROL : Executive Engineer, Administration Department

615.1 Requirement/Authority

- a. The requirement that Federal agencies issue internal regulations concerning the management and use of telecommunications resources is stated in 41 CFR 101-35.201(d)(3).
- b. Other government-wide public laws and USIBWC Directives having a direct or indirect impact upon the application of the provisions of this Directive include, but are not limited to, 18 USC § 1001; 41 CFR 301, Federal Travel Regulations; United States Section Directive Volume I, Chapter 522, SUBJECT: Ethical Conduct - Standards, Dated January 9, 1996, United States Section Directive Volume I, Chapter 665, SUBJECT: Employee Conduct: Discipline and Adverse Actions, Dated December 10, 1999; The Federal Managers's Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA) of 1982; and United States Section Directive Volume II, Chapter 1004, SUBJECT: Internal Accounting and Administrative Controls, Dated October 8, 1993.

615.2 Purpose

The purpose of this Directive is to provide the USIBWC's policy on the management and use of telecommunication resources, including local telephone systems, long distance

services, agency-provided calling cards, and agency owned or leased cellular telephones.

615.3 Responsibilities

- (a) **Managers and supervisors** are responsible for:
 - (1) Being thoroughly familiar with and observing the provisions of this Directive and any manual(s) and/or handbook(s) concerning the subject of this Directive which may be issued or authorized for use by the USIBWC;
 - (2) Assuring that all telecommunication resources in their work unit are utilized in accordance with the provisions of this Directive and any manual(s) and/or handbook(s) concerning the subject of this Directive and/or internal controls which may be issued or authorized for use by the USIBWC;
 - (3) Bringing this Directive and/or any manual(s) or handbook(s) concerning the subject of this Directive which may be issued or authorized for use by the USIBWC to the attention of all USIBWC employees under their supervision who utilize the agency's telecommunication resources. This will include assuring that a "hard-copy" of the Directive and/or any handbooks, manuals, etc., which may be issued are immediately available for the employees' review; and
 - (4) Carefully reviewing substantial reported instances where employees make personal use of USIBWC telecommunications resources for adherence to the provisions of this Directive.
- (2) **Employees**, defined as any individual(s) employed by the USIBWC through any personnel appointment including, but not limited to, Presidential, Schedule A, B, or C, Temporary, TERM, TAPER, Student, Consultant, Career, and/or Career-Conditional appointments - without regard to the source of funding for their salaries and expenses, are responsible for assuring that the telecommunications resources of the agency are used:
 - (A) For their stated purpose which is for official business of the USIBWC as defined in paragraph 615.4; and
 - (B) In accordance with the provisions of this Directive and any manual(s) and/or handbooks concerning the subject of this Directive which may be issued or authorized for use by the USIBWC.
- (3) **Government contractor and subcontractor employees** who are hired by

the USIBWC and who are using USIBWC telecommunications resources must comply with the provisions of this Directive and any handbooks/manuals which may be issued concerning telecommunications resources.

- (4) The **Executive Engineer, Administration Department**, is responsible for the overall implementation of this Directive.
- (5) The **Chief, Administrative Services Division** is responsible for providing technical supervision, direction, and support through the Property Officer.
- (6) The **Property Officer** is responsible for:
 - (A) Oversight and evaluation of the USIBWC's management of telecommunication resources;
 - (B) Ensuring that all Federal laws and regulations, USIBWC policies and instructions, and guidelines issued by Federal regulatory agencies and responsible USIBWC offices are provided to all USIBWC employees through their management chain to the extent required and in a manner which is most advantageous to the agency; and
 - (C) Serving as the USIBWC'S **Designated Agency Representative (DAR)** and primary point of contact between the USIBWC and the General Services Administration (GSA) as well as commercial telecommunications vendors.

615.4 Definitions

- (a) **CONUS** - refers to the 48 contiguous United States;
- (b) **Electronic mail** - commonly referred to as "e-mail," is transmitted through the computer system and is considered an information technology (IT) resource. As such, it is regulated by USIBWC Directive Volume II, Chapter 101, SUBJECT: Management of Information Technology Resources, Dated: June 29, 2000.
- (c) **Government long distance telephone service** - any service, calling card, conferencing card, or other facility purchased or reimbursed with Government funds for completing telephone calls outside of the local service area. This includes both Government and commercially provided services.
- (d) **FAX** is the facsimile transmission of documents via telephone and is a telecommunication resource.

- (e) **OCONUS** - refers to areas outside the 48 contiguous United States, including the States of Alaska and Hawaii.
- (f) **Official business calls** - calls made to conduct the official business of the USIBWC. Such calls may include calls made at the USIBWC's expense for emergency purposes, and other calls as defined elsewhere in this Directive, which are determined to be in the interest of the United States Government.
- (g) **Telecommunications resources** - any resource for communicating with another individual or individuals, other than face-to-face meetings or messages sent via electronic mail, standard mail, and radio. They include standard telephone systems, cellular telephone systems, and long distance and conferencing cards which are purchased by or paid for with Government funds.

615.5 Government Long Distance Telephone Services

- (A) All calls that result in a cost to the USIBWC shall be made for official business unless otherwise authorized by travel regulations or as stated in this Directive.
- (B) Employees who make unauthorized, not for official business, not allowed by travel regulations, and not otherwise permitted by this Directive, telephone calls will be required to reimburse the USIBWC for the cost of the calls and the administrative costs.
- (C) An employee may make a personal long distance call using Government telecommunications resources without having to pay for the call and/or being subject to discipline if the call:
 - (1) Does not adversely affect the performance of the employee's official duties and is authorized as stated below;
 - (2) Is charged to the employee's personal telephone number;
 - (3) Is charged to the employee's personal telephone or credit card;
 - (4) Is made to a toll-free number (800, 855, 866, 877, 888 area codes);
 - (5) Is charged to the called party (collect call) if it is a non-Government number or is a Government number for which collect calls are authorized; and/or

- (6) Is in conjunction with an emergency or is in conjunction with a serious family situation such as unexpectedly having to arrange for the safety and well being of minor or disabled children or elderly dependent relatives of the family.

The supervisor of the work unit should establish the “ground rules” for such calls, and should be available for consultation when employees have questions.

615.6 Government-provided Long Distance and Conferencing Calling Cards

- (a) All employees who travel frequently are issued an agency-sponsored Federal telephone calling card from a designated provider. Other employees may be issued such a card if his/her supervisor approves its issuance.
- (b) Personal telephone calls while in travel status:
 - (1) In accordance with 41 CFR 301-12 of the Federal Travel Regulations, employees in travel status are authorized to make personal telephone calls to his/her place of residence or to other locations to contact immediate family members or others in his/her care at the expense of the USIBWC, not to exceed daily limits set by the agency for CONUS and OCONUS travel;
 - (2) Because the telephone rates (less than 3¢ per minute) which the agency enjoys under the current negotiated contract are much lower than long distance rates under most rate plans, employees are encouraged, within the framework of (1) immediately above, to use his/her agency-issued Federal calling card when making authorized personal calls while on travel status;
 - (3) Employees should not itemize authorized personal telephone calls on their travel voucher **IF** the calls were made using their agency-issued Federal telephone calling card;
 - (4) Employees may still make authorized personal telephone calls using their personal telephone or credit card, or through the hotel’s long distance provider. The employee must itemize these calls on their travel voucher and provide receipts to receive reimbursement; and
 - (5) The combined total cost of authorized personal calls which can be reimbursed, including those calls made using the agency-issued Federal telephone calling card, are subject to the agency-established dollar limitations stated in the USIBWC travel policy . This is currently

\$5.00 per day, but this is subject to change which will be reflected in the USIBWC travel policies. Employees should exercise care in completing their travel vouchers to assure that the employee receives all reimbursement to which he/she is entitled, **and** to avoid the error of claiming dual reimbursement.

- (c) Each Division and Office Chief at Headquarters, as well as field Project Managers, will be issued a personal Federal conferencing card issued by the current long-distance provider. This card may be used to set up conference calls among three or more parties. All conference calls must be for conducting official USIBWC business.
- (d) Use of in-flight telephone service (air phones)
 - (1) In-flight telephone service is **NOT** covered under our current long distance contract. Because of the very high cost, use of the Government Travel Card to make in-flight calls on airline air-to-ground phones is **not authorized** except as provided below.
 - (2) Personal in-flight calls may be charged to the employee's personal credit card or personal telephone calling card.
 - (3) Due to the current high cost of air-to-ground telephone calls, use of in-flight air service for official calls is discouraged except as provided immediately below.
 - a. An emergency, such as:
 - i The plane is rerouted in flight, causing a substantial delay in the employee's arrival;
 - ii The employee sustained personal injury or illness during the flight; or
 - iii Urgent official business, such as flight delays in route which will cause the employee to be late in arriving at scheduled meetings or dealing with other urgent matters.
 - b. Under the circumstances described in i, ii, and iii above, an employee may charge in-flight calls to their Government travel card, or may use their personal credit card and claim the call(s) on their travel voucher. When claimed on the travel voucher, the employee should explain the circumstances completely.

615.7 Government-provided Cellular Telephones

(a) Cellular telephones and service are provided to aid in conducting official business in an increasingly mobile environment. Such service is substantially more expensive than conventional telephone service. An employee should limit the use of his/her agency-provided cellular telephone to those times when communication is necessary, but access to conventional telephone service is unavailable, is restricted, **or is not safe to use**.

(b) On occasion, an employee may find it necessary to inform family members of delayed arrival due to unforeseen circumstances while conducting official business. Such a call, local or long distance, is acceptable when the employee is unable to access conventional telephone services. In addition, there will be occasions when an employee may need to receive incoming calls that are urgent in nature regarding family matters.

(c) Calls made using an agency-provided cellular telephone to perform routine personal tasks such as verifying bank balances are considered unauthorized calls, and are subject to collection in accordance with this section and sections **615.8**, **615.9** and **615.10** below.

(d) A cost disadvantage of cellular telephones is that both incoming and outgoing calls are charged to the number of the cellular telephone sending or receiving the call. Individuals to whom a government cellular telephone is assigned must be made aware that he/she is responsible for the cost of incoming personal telephone calls as well as those which the employee makes. Given the cost of such calls as explained in sections **615.9** and **615.10** below, employees should impress upon those to whom the employee gives the cellular telephone number that calls should be limited to official business and/or emergencies.

(e) When such enhancements are available, the USIBWC may contract with the cellular service to activate a second line on an agency-provided cellular telephone for the employee's personal use. The service provider will set up a separate account which will be billed directly to the employee. The USIBWC accepts no liability for service on the second line. All costs incurred for the second line shall be paid by the employee. When this option is available, personal calls on the primary line, paid for by the USIBWC, are considered unauthorized calls and will be subject to collection in accordance with this section and sections **615.8**, **615.9** and **615.10** below.

615.8 Reporting Personal Use of Telecommunications Resources

The USIBWC recognizes that there will be personal use of agency local and long-distance telecommunications resources. In any instance of personal use, the employee is responsible for accurately recording the use and advising his/her supervisor at the earliest opportunity. Reporting procedures are outlined below.

(A) Conventional Telephones

1. When an employee has no option and must use a conventional government telephone for a personal long distance call, the employee should provide the following information to his/her supervisor:
 - a. Date and time of the call;
 - b. City and State to which the call was made (name and telephone number is not required);
 - c. Approximate amount of time the call required; and
 - d. Whether or not the employee believes the call falls within one of the exceptions. If the employee believes the call falls within one of the exceptions, the employee should provide full information regarding the call for the supervisor's consideration in making a determination.
2. Most Field Offices receive their monthly telephone bill while the Headquarters bill is centralized. When a supervisor receives a monthly bill, the supervisor will annotate the bill to reflect that personal calls were involved, and where it was a call subject to collection, will show the amount to be collected from the employee, computed as shown in section **615.9**. The official business certification stamp should be annotated with a pen and ink change at the beginning to read, "Except as otherwise indicated,"

(B) Cellular Telephones

1. Since the individual to whom the cellular telephone is assigned will receive and must review and certify the bill, the employee will mark by highlighting those calls made and received which were personal calls. The employee is responsible for calls not falling within an exception cited in this Directive. The total of these calls will be added, and the administrative fee will be added to the total. This is the amount which the employee will be required to pay. The employee may submit a check or money order with the bill to the Finance and Accounting Office.
2. If the bill reflects personal calls which the employee believes fall within one of the exceptions, the employee should provide an explanation, and have his or her supervisor review the explanation. The supervisor is responsible for approving or disapproving the exception. If disapproved, the employee must pay for the call(s).

3. When a cellular telephone bill contains personal calls for which the employee must pay, the certification should be annotated "Except as otherwise indicated,....."

615.9 Collection for Personal Use of Telecommunication Resources

A. As directed in 41 CFR 101-35.202, the USIBWC will collect for any unauthorized calls made using an agency-owned or -provided telecommunication resource, including conventional telephones, cellular telephones, calling cards, and conferencing cards.

B. The collection(s) shall include:

1. For conventional telephones, the value of the call, computed by multiplying the length of the call by the established commercial per-minute long distance rate of the USIBWC's current long-distance telephone service provider, rounded to the nearest dollar. Collections are for unauthorized calls made over conventional telephone systems and/or using Federal calling or conference cards; or
2. For cellular telephones, the value of the call as shown on the bill, including roaming and peak hour charges, long distance charges, and taxes. For local calls where there are no extra charges (within the allotted monthly minute amount), the percentage of time the phone was used for personal calls multiplied times the total local services bill will be the amount owed. For example, if the total minutes used were 70 and the personal calls used up seven (7) minutes, the percentage would be 10%. ; **AND**
3. The administrative and processing fee as set by the Finance and Accounting Office. As of the date of this Directive, the administrative and processing fee was \$12.70 per billing. The administrative and processing fee is a fixed fee which is not prorated regardless of the amount to be collected or the number of calls involved. The Finance and Accounting Office will recompute the administrative and processing fee on or about the beginning of each calendar year, and this amount will be applicable for the balance of the calendar year.
4. The responsibility for collecting these costs rests with the employee's immediate supervisor. While the Finance and Accounting Office will assist, the supervisor must assure collection or the initiation of appropriate action consistent with USIBWC Directives.

615.10 Supersession

This Directive cancels and supersedes United States Section Directive Volume II, Chapter 615, SUBJECT: Management and Use of Telecommunications Resources, Date: September 7, 2000.

615.11 Effective Date

The provisions of this Directive are effective 15 calendar days following the date of issue.

Carlos M. Ramirez, P.E.
United States Commissioner